RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 5th May, 1987/15 Vaisakha, 1909 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Atrocities by Burmese Insurgents along Mizoram border

*261. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:†

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that people living in the border areas of Mizoram, who had a respite from 20 years' insurgency only recently, now face danger to their lives and property from the Burmese insurgents;

(b) whether it is a fact that these Burmese insurgents are extorting money and foodstuff from the Mizos and are also forcing them to pay taxes; and

(c) if so, what action the Central Government have taken or propose to take to check such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) According to the State Government of Mizoram there were reports that some Burmese insurgents were seen in some villages of Chhimtuipui District. It was also reported that Burmese insurgents while inside Mizoram collected foodstuff for their consumption, but there was no extortion of money or collection of taxes.

(c) On receipt of information about the presence of Burmese insurgents, patrols of Assam Rifles were sent to search the area on March 18, 1987. The Assam Rifles patrol encountered some Burmese and in exchange of fire, one Burmese insurgent was killed and four others were apprehended. Special operations were also conducted in the last week of March, 1987, to flush out the intruders from Southern Mizoram. According to the State Government the entire area is reported to have been completely cleared and there is no further report of any movement of Burmese insurgents inside Mizoram since then. The area continues to be under surveillance.

SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Sir, the hon. Minister has admitted in his reply: "It was also reported that Burmese insurgents while inside Mizoram collected foodstuff for their consumption, but there was no extortion of money or collection of taxes". May I know from the Home Minister whether these foodstuffs were collected on payment or taken away by them forcibly?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we know that they collected foodstuffs, but whether they paid for any portion of it or collected it forcibly is being enquired into. I cannot say anything definitely unless we have the results of the enquiry that is being conducted.

SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Sir, insurgency into our country comes from all sides—sometimes from Pakistan, sometime from Bangladesh and someimes from Burma. May I know from the Home Minister whether the Government is finding any permanent solution to check this menace of insurgency? These insurgents come into our country sometimes taking away cattle forcibly, sometimes taking away foodstuffs forcibly and sometimes extorting money from the people. I would like to know whether there is any permanent solution which the Government is contemplating for that.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, eternal vigilance is the only permanent solu-

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mukhtiar Singh Malik.

tion and we are maintaining it. And on this particular incident we have requested the Ministry of External Affairs to take it up with the Burmese authorities and they have promised to take it up with the Burmese authorities.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Sir, in part (c) of the reply it is mentioned: "Special operations were also conducted in the last week of March, 1987, to flush out the intruders from Southern Mizoram." May I know from the hon. Minister how many such intruders were found at the time of that operation? Were they in large numbers or were there very few?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, on 18th March, 1987, one patrol of Assam Rifles encountered some Burmese at a place called Kaki Ferry. On being challenged, the intruders opened fire. One Burmese insurgent was killed. Another Assam Rifles patrol, on the same day, apprehended four intruders from an area approximately 5 kilometres to the north of Lamasu. They are being interrogated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You say that some Burmese came in. The question is: is it a large number or a small number? Can you give the number?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, in these two incidents, in the first one Burmese insurgent was killed and in the other we have apprehended four.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But how many came?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: We are not able to say how many came.

SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that he members of an extremist organisation in Assam, known as ULFA, go to Burma, get arms training there and come back.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we know that ULFA has been active in recent times in Assam. There is reason to believe that they do cross over to Burma and come and operate here.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, one of the main reasons for the kind of insurgency on the Burmese border is the fact that the area adjoining our border, the part which falls in Burma, is almost like a no-man's land. There is no government from the Burmese side in that area, and the people are at liberty to do whatever they like. So, the main requirement is that we must approach the Burmese Government and request them to have a kind of government in that area, and then only this insurgency would be controlled. Would efforts be made in this direction?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, there is indeed a Government in Burma. It is not for us to tell them how they should run their country. As far as this incident is concerned, we have taken it up through the Ministry of External Affairs, and they will take it up with the Government of Burma.

On the larger question, Sir, I may say that the Burmese authorities have a formal agreement with India regarding exchange of information about the movement and activities of these groups, and we are receiving co-operation from the Burmese Government.

SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: From the answer of the Minister it is clear that the entire North-Eastern States are kept open for the neighbouring states so that infiltrators can enter at their own sweet will. We have seen that in Arunachal, Chinese are coming and they have intruded already more than 38 km. and they are collecting taxes. In Mizoram also we have seen. The Government has admitted it. In Tripura also we have seen the insurgency. In Assam also we have seen the infiltration of foreign nationals. I want to know from the Minister concerned whether the Government is going to take some positive steps to seal the border so that there will be no more infiltration or whether they are going to take positive steps to drive out the foreign nationals who have already intruded into those States.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir we are taking steps. But, please, let us understand, Sir, the nature of this border.

These are hilly tracts. These are very difficult terrains. On the border in the states or countries like Burma there are militant groups which are operating. In India there are militant groups operating. They are operating on either side of the border. There will always be some activity of this kind. We are conscious of it. We are taking action in co-operation with the State Governments.

But, to speak of sealing the border, as I said, it is a catchy phrase. You cannot seal a border. You can only be vigilant and see that people do not infiltrate and they are kept out.

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATARI: May I know from the Home Minister, Sir, what the internal relation is between the ULFA and the AASU? The AASU has come out of the AGP. Now they are agitating against the Government of AGP at the moment. It is clear, Sir, the police is charging the ULFA with killing the people. But it is not they. It is they who are encouraging them. So, I want to know from the Minister what the internal relationship is between the AGP and the AASU, and also ULFA?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, I am very sorry, this kind of political infiltration is not easy to be stopped, and Government cannot do anything.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Sir, my question is this. Northern Burma has always been a very soft spot where insurgents can find hide-outs, and they are there all the time. At times we have carried out joint operations in that area in order to deal with those insurgents who easily go and find hide-outs there. Can an effort be made to persuade the Burmese Government to carry out similar operations once again?

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, some of these crossings into Mizoram are as a result of the Burmese Army action on their side of the border against these groups which are really opposed to the Burmese Government. We can, of course, consider the suggestion which the hon. Member has made.

Demand for Statehood for Delhi

*262. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:†
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand from the prominent citizens of Delhi for a fullfiedged Statehood for Delhi; and

(b) if so, what decision has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) and (b) Demand for Statehood for Delhi has been made off and on. It is not proposed to bring about any change for the present.

श्री मुख्तियार सिंह मलिक : आदरणीय सभापति जी, मुझे मिनिस्टर साहब ने जो जवाब दिया है उसे सुनकर बड़ी हैरानी होती है क्योंकि स्टेटहुड की डिमांड दिल्ली के लिए आज कोई नयी नहीं है, बड़ी पुरानी चली आ रही है, सालों से चली आ रही है। तीन हुकूमतें यहां पर राज कर चुकी हैं। जनसंघ का मेटरोपोलिटन कौंसिल पर अधिकार रहा, जनता पार्टी का अधिकार रहा, दो दफा कांग्रेस (आई) का अधिकार रहा। सब की तरफ से यह रेजोल्यूशन पास हो चुका है कि दिल्ली को स्टेटहुड का दर्जा दिया जाये। खैर मैं इन बातों पर ज्यादा नहीं जाना चाहता। जैसे गधे का मुंह बांध कर हरी पत्ती डाल दी जाती है खाने के लिए उसी तरह की आज यह स्टेटमेंट दे रहे हैं कि फार द प्रेजेंट

†The question actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mukhtiar Singh Malik.